

Council on Postsecondary Education  
September 16, 2001

## Executive Summary

### 1. Are more Kentuckians ready for postsecondary education?

The P-16 Council has completed its second year, continuing its three-part agenda focused on teacher education, alignment of P-12 and postsecondary curricula, and increased college-going. Current membership on the P-16 Council includes representation from the council, the State Board of Education, and the Education Professional Standards Board. Increasingly, the P-16 Council finds its work connected to issues pertaining to early childhood and workforce development. The quality of early childhood education affects subsequent educational success, and postsecondary institutions play a primary role in preparing early childhood educators. And the demands of an educated workforce require collaboration among schools, colleges, and workforce development policymakers.

The staff recommends that the council extend the membership of the P-16 Council to include Kim Townley, executive director of the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development, and Allen Rose, secretary of the Cabinet for Workforce Development. (For details, see page 51.)

The ACT scores of Kentucky high school students went up one-tenth of a percentage point last year but remain below the national average (21.0

compared to 20.1). The percentage of high school students taking the ACT increased slightly, from 47 to 48 percent.

For the first time, Kentucky students reached national average scores on the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills, which is given to students in grades 3, 6, and 9. The Kentucky college-going rate of recent high school graduates remains lower than the national average (56 percent compared to 65 percent) and the percentage of students leaving high school before receiving their diploma increased last year. At the same time, more Kentuckians are completing their GED examinations, and there is a significant surge in the number of persons taking the exam. This may be attributed to the communication campaign being conducted by the council and the Department of Adult Education and Literacy. Now that they are aware that almost one-fourth of Kentucky's high school completers are GED recipients, several universities have followed the lead of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System in targeting these persons as potential collegegoers.

The initial phase of the public communication campaign, designed to raise awareness of upcoming changes in the GED exam, appears to have been a success. The campaign is augmented by initiatives from the Governor's Office, the Kentucky Pre-Paid Tuition Program, and the Kentucky Virtual University. At last count, postcards, posters, and radio advertisements in June and July had generated 6,000 referrals to adult education programs in 47 counties. A total of 3,825 GED examinations were given in June, up from 2,229 the same time last year, which prompted the Department for Adult Education and Literacy to add six new GED test centers across the state. The KYVU call center has provided an adult education hotline, a partnership which will continue at least through the campaign. The next phase of the campaign, targeting adults and teens, will be launched October 5 with a press conference at KET. Governor Patton is scheduled to attend. I hope you will have a chance to visit the display

at the trusteeship conference that highlights the campaign's creative materials and results.

When we think about Question 1 and college readiness, it's important that we consider not only the academic preparation of students but also whether college in Kentucky is affordable to all who can and want to attend. We bring you tables showing 2002-04 tuition rates and estimated tuition and fees revenue. These can be found beginning on page 53.